another day

New York Times bestselling author of every day

david levithan

EDUCATORS’ GUIDE
INCLUDES COMMON CORE STATE STANDARD CORRELATIONS
In this enthralling companion to his New York Times bestseller Every Day, David Levithan tells Rhiannon’s side of the story as she seeks to discover the truth about love and how it can change you.

Every day is the same for Rhiannon. She has accepted her life, convinced herself that she deserves her distant, temperamental boyfriend, Justin, even established guidelines by which to live: Don’t be too needy. Avoid upsetting him. Never get your hopes up.

Until the morning everything changes. Justin seems to see her, to want to be with her for the first time, and they share a perfect day—a perfect day Justin doesn’t remember the next morning. Confused, depressed, and desperate for another day as great as that one, Rhiannon starts questioning everything.

Then, one day, a stranger tells her that the Justin she spent that day with, the one who made her feel like a real person . . . wasn’t Justin at all.

Activities

1. During a tense scene, a character in the novel says, “Sorry. He’s sorry. I’m sorry. We’re all so sorry” (p. 167), implying that sometimes saying sorry just isn’t enough to make a situation right. Have students reflect with a partner on how we use apologies in our society.
   a. When are they issued?
   b. What purposes do they serve?
   c. Are there different levels of apology?
   d. Are apologies always honest reflections of remorse?
2. One of the characters in the novel attempts to live by the mantra “Do no damage” (p. 299). As a class, discuss whether or not this creed provides a reasonable guide to life.
   a. What are the affordances of such a philosophy?
   b. What are the limitations?
   c. Have students work independently to find or create a creed to govern their own lives. Perhaps have them record these words inside the front cover of a writing journal for inspiration.
3. A central theme of Another Day revolves around relationships and how individuals can be strengthened or weakened by the bonds they have with those around them. One friend offers a character this advice: “It’s just nice to see you out from his shadow. Because things don’t grow in shadows, you know? . . . I don’t know who this new guy is, but make sure when you’re with him, you’re not standing in his shadow. Stand where everyone can see you” (p. 293). Ask students to work in small groups to consider the implications of this image.
   a. What does it mean to stand in someone’s shadow?
   b. Is this an inherently negative or positive place to reside?
   c. What other images might be used to capture the relationship between two people?

Connections

Perceptions and Stereotypes
Rhiannon realizes quickly that she responds differently to A depending upon the body A inhabits, making judgments based upon what she sees on the outside. She explains this as common practice among humans: “When my friends see this body, they assume they know a lot about the person inside of it. And when people I don’t know see it, they also make assumptions. . . . It’s like an instant form of reading, the way we define each other” (pp. 192–193).

Ask students to keep these words in mind as they listen to and reflect upon the radio broadcasts below.

Issues of self-worth are central to the novel, in a conversation with A, Rhiannon speaks the

1. At several points in the novel, Rhiannon struggles to be more accepting of A when A appears to her as a female rather than a male. She attributes her difficulties as resulting in part from language, arguing, “Part of the problem is words. The fact that there are separate words for he and she, him and her. . . . Maybe if there was just one pronoun for all of us, we wouldn’t get so caught on that difference” (p. 233).

2. Ask students to research the movement to use one pronoun for all. What are the benefits of such usage? Challenges?

3. As Rhiannon stands with her feet in the ocean, she reflects on the power she possesses: “The water feels so good, and standing still feels so good, because there’s a whole ocean pulling at me and I have the strength to stay where I am” (p. 14).

4. When Rhiannon and A (in the body of Justin) skip school to enjoy their day at the beach, Rhiannon attempts to rationalize the decision by telling herself, “I can make up my homework, but I can’t make up my life” (p. 12).

5. How effective is this image in conveying her participation in mediating Kelsea’s situation (pp. 113–119)?

6. As the novel unfolds, we learn that Rhiannon harbored thoughts of suicide before she met Justin. Although she says she knew she would not take her life, she “treasured” the thought that “she could.” As she reflects further, she states, “Most of the time when we think we’re looking for death, we’re really looking for love” (p. 112).

7. After the messy breakup of Justin and Rhiannon, gossip about Rhiannon’s identity runs rampant throughout school. “Apparently,” Rhiannon explains to A, “I’m now a Metalhead slut. . . . According to some sources, I’ve even slept with members of Metallica. It’s kind of funny, but also kind of not” (p. 265).

8. To help make sense of A’s experience and better handle her own judgmental reactions to A’s differing external forms, Rhiannon imagines the body as a car and the real self as the driver (pp. 215–216).

9. Rhiannon tells A, “I would rather be hurt than be mean. Because I can live with myself if I’m hurt. I don’t think I could live with myself if I were mean” (p. 223).

10. The novel ends with the line “I want to find A” (p. 327).

Have students replicate the grocery-store task shared by Rhiannon and A (as Alexander) on page 311 and tell students to explain the following question:


5. How can gossip be both funny—and not?

6. How can she hold this power when we know gossip is rarely true?

7. What purposes do they serve?

8. A and C are usually associated with love, like attraction—that are the hardest to map. In what ways does this formula not apply?

9. How can we talk without communicating?

10. Give students space and permission to explore living options beyond their town/city borders by having them research, create, and present a travel brochure, magazine article, website, or other artifact for a place about which they’d like to know more.

11. As she thinks about her complicated relationship with A, Rhiannon concludes, “It’s the shapeless things—like love, like attraction—that are the hardest to map” (p. 177).

12. Give students space in the classroom to create their own wise-words wall.

13. Have students replicate the grocery-store task shared by Rhiannon and A (as Alexander) on page 311 and tell their life story in cereals (or some other category of interest—candy bars, rock bands, etc.).
1. Both novels explore continuity and the role of tomorrow in our conception of life. Rhiannon is saddened that A has never experienced the ups and downs that come from relationships built over time, while A finds solace in the vast variety of experiences A has been able to enjoy. Consider the concept of tomorrow.
   a. Would you live differently if you had no continuity from day to day, if tomorrow wasn’t connected to today?
   b. What would be gained?
   c. What would be lost?
   d. How is this idea represented in the titles of the novels?

2. Both novels examine the mystery of identity—why we’re born as we are in the place and time we exist. A explains to Rhiannon that, in A’s view, all lives are filled with elements of the unexplained. A asks her, “Do you really know why you are the way you are? Or why you do the things you do? . . . We’re all in the dark” (Another Day, p. 280).
   a. How would you respond to A’s questions?
   b. How might your answer address the issues of inequity and privilege described during A’s experiences on Day 6011 (Every Day, p. 180)?

3. The point of view of the narrator influences significantly the impressions and details we receive as readers of the two novels. This distinction is particularly salient in the portrayal of Justin as seen through the eyes of A and the eyes of Rhiannon. For example, in Another Day, we learn more about Justin’s penchant for Girl Scout cookies (pp. 88–92) and his emotional response to the illness of his grandmother (p. 106).
   a. Are moments like these enough to justify Rhiannon’s decision to stay with him?
   b. What might a version of events as seen through Justin’s eyes reveal?

4. As A and Rhiannon work to know one another better, they turn to books as windows into their individual identities (Every Day, pp. 226ff; Another Day, pp. 221ff).
   a. If you had to select three books that say something about who you are, which would you pick and why?

5. As you contemplate the endings of both novels, consider the motivations that drive the final decisions of A and Rhiannon.
   a. What are they both hoping to achieve?
   b. Whose plan do you admire more?
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Every day a different body.
Every day a different life.
Every day in love with the same girl.

“Wise, wildly unique.” — Entertainment Weekly

A New York Times Bestseller

Featuring
Six Additional Chapters
in A’s Life

David Levithan
It's all fine until the morning that A wakes up in too attached. Avoid being noticed. Do not interfere. established guidelines by which to live: Never get who it will be. A has made peace with that, even There's never any warning about where it will be or life. Every day in love with the same girl. Every day a different body. Every day a different body, living a different life. about A, a teen who wakes up every morning in a calls a “wise, wildly unique” love story Weekly Levithan introduces readers to what "Every You, Every Me" is destined to change every day.

Every day a different body. Every day after day. A has found someone A wants to be with—day in, day out, day after day. With this novel, David Levithan has pushed himself to new creative heights. He has written a captivating story that will fascinate readers as they begin to comprehend the complexities of life and love in A's world, as A and Rhiannon seek to discover whether you can truly love someone who is destined to change every day.

ABOUT THE Author

DAVID LEVITHAN is a children’s book editor in New York City and the author of several books for young adults, including Lambda Literary Award winner Two Boys Kissing; Every Day and its companion, Another Day; Nick & Norah’s Infinite Playlist, Naomi and Ely’s No Kiss List, and Dash & Lily’s Book of Dares (coauthored with Rachel Cohn); Will Grayson, Will Grayson (coauthored with John Green); and Every You, Every Me (with photographs by Jonathan Farmer). He lives in Hoboken, New Jersey.
1. **What are the challenges that A faces as a result of A’s reality? What are the benefits? With these in mind, are there any circumstances under which you would wish to emulate A’s body-changing experience?**

**Questions** (continued)

2. **Are you troubled when A interacts with Rhiannon without her knowledge (for example, when A poses as a gay teen in order to dance with her [pp. 73–74])? Why or why not?**

3. **How much of an impact does (and should) A have on the bodies A inhabits? Do you agree with A’s claim that “A life isn’t real unless someone else hears her voice.” I have always been grateful she listens. Hearing back from her is not the same as seeing her face as she listens. Hearing back from her is not the same as hearing her voice. I have always been grateful for technology, but now it feels as if there’s a little hitch of separation woven into any digital interaction.” (p. 213). What are the benefits and challenges of conversing in digital forms?**

4. **Rhiannon calls A “the guest” in the lives of those whose bodies A inhabits (p. 259). Should A’s life come second? Or is A a person deserving of choice? Do you agree with A’s claim that “A life isn’t real unless someone else knows its reality” (p. 91)?**

5. **When Nathan compares A to the devil, A is forced to consider what keeps A from choosing to do harm. A determines that A is no different from anyone else who chooses not to commit a crime each and every day (p. 171). Why do most people choose not to commit a crime? Are humans inherently good?**

6. **In a pivotal chapter, A wakes up in Rhiannon’s body (pp. 188ff). If you could spend a day living the life of anyone else, who would you choose, if anyone, and why?**

7. **Consider A’s frustration in the following passage: “I have to resort to email, and email is not enough. I am starting to get tired of relying on words. They are full of meaning, yes, but they lack sensation. Writing to her is not the same as seeing her face as she listens. Hearing back from her is not the same as hearing her voice. I have always been grateful for technology, but now it feels as if there’s a little hitch of separation woven into any digital interaction.” (p. 213). What are the benefits and challenges of conversing in digital forms?**

8. **Near the novel’s end, A states, “If you stare at the center of the universe, there is a coldness there. A blankness. Ultimately, the universe doesn’t care about us. Time doesn’t care about us. That’s why we have to care about each other” (p. 320).**

   a. Is this a compelling enough reason for us to care?  
   b. Are connections with others essential for our happiness? Why or why not?

9. **As you reflect upon the various people you meet through A, which person sticks with you? What writing techniques does Levithan use to create this particularly memorable portrait?**

10. **Every Day deals with emotionally difficult subjects (e.g., drug addiction, depression, bullying, body image). After reading the novel and being exposed to a wide array of lived realities experienced by the people A inhabits, do you feel hopeful, hopeless, helpless, empowered, something else?**

**Activities**

1. **In the opening pages of the novel, we learn that A can access “facts, not feelings” associated with the bodies he inhabits (p. 2). This identity-swap activity will allow students to examine how much/how little we can know about others based upon factual information.**

   a. On a half-sheet of paper that contains no identifying information, have students complete the following prompts for themselves:

      i. My favorite color is . . .
      ii. My ideal vacation destination is . . .
      iii. I sometimes worry about . . .

   **Upon completion and collection, redistribute the half-sheets to all members of the class.**

   b. **Given the following scenario, ask students to generate a piece of writing that draws upon the facts before them.**

      i. You are at the grocery store.
      ii. You turn down the aisle, and there she is, the one person you aren’t ready to face . . .

   After writing, solicit student volunteers to share their writing. At the conclusion of the sharing, have students reveal which facts belong to whom.

2. **When A spends the day in Rhiannon’s body, A takes her on a hike to the top of a small mountain in hopes that the view at the summit will provide a new perspective. A encourages her to remember that “when no one else is around, we open ourselves to the quieter astonishments that enormity can offer” (p. 198).**

   a. Take students outside to a quiet spot on campus and have them sit in a circle in which all are facing outward.
   b. Ask them to just be present for a few moments, to notice the world around them in whatever way they desire (eyes closed or open, heads up or down, etc.). Encourage them to pay attention to things that often go unnoticed.
   c. Regroup for a reflective class discussion on the experience.

3. **During their special outing at the beach, A (in Justin’s body) and Rhiannon describe some of their best days, from a mother-daughter fashion show to a journey to new heights in a tree during a game of hide-and-seek (pp. 17–22).**

   a. Ask students to reflect upon their own memories and capture in writing a special part of their past.
   b. Engage in a writing workshop to bring the piece to publication.
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